Determining Future Travel Behavior from Past Travel Experience and Perceptions of Risk and Safety

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Abstract:

This study examined the influences of past international travel experience, types of risk associated with international travel, and the overall degree of safety felt during international travel on individuals' likelihood of travel to various geographic regions on their next international vacation trip or avoidance of those regions due to perceived risk. Information integration theory and protection motivation theory served as the theoretical framework for the study. A mail survey sent to 500 international travelers achieved a 48% response rate. Nonresponse bias was tested with telephone interviews. Data were analyzed using cross tabulations and logistic regression. Results revealed that past travel experience to specific regions both increases the intention to travel there again and decreases the intention to avoid areas, particularly risky areas. Perceived risks and safety were both found to be stronger predictors of avoiding regions than of planning to visit them.

Article:

Why travelers avoid certain destinations is as relevant to the study of tourist decision making as why they choose to travel to others. Perceptions of risk and safety and travel experience are likely to influence travel decisions; efforts to predict future travel behavior can benefit from studies of tourist decision making, risk perceptions, and the influence of past travel experience. Most tourist decision-making studies have echoed consumer decision-making research, focusing on the analysis of choice sets and decision modeling (Ankomah, Crompton, and Baker 1996; Crompton 1979, 1992; Goodrich 1978; Pitts and Woodside 1986; Um and Crompton 1990; van Raaij 1986; van Raaij and Francken 1984; Woodside and Lysonski 1989). This approach, while useful for studying routine tourist decisions, might be somewhat weak in situations involving risk because the element of risk has the potential to alter the decision process.

Weber and Bottom (1989) define risky decisions as "choices among alternatives that can be described by probability distributions over possible outcomes" (p. 114). They add an implicit assumption that at least one of the possible outcomes must be undesirable (or at least less desirable than the others) for risk to exist. In the case of tourism experiences, undesirable might signify anything from a disappointing travel experience (psychological risk) to a serious threat to the traveler's health or life (health, physical, or terrorism risk). Regardless of whether real or perceived, the presence of risk has the potential to change the nature of travel decisions. When risk perceptions or safety concerns are introduced into travel decisions, they have the potential to become overriding factors—altering the context of conventional models of decision making and causing travelers to amend travel plans. Therefore, conventional models of decision making are not likely to explain decision outcomes in such cases. This was demonstrated most recently by the significant decline in international travel activity during the Persian Gulf War (Goodrich 1991).

Although the role of perceived risk in decision making has been examined in various disciplines, it has only recently drawn the attention of tourism researchers (Cook and McCleary 1983; Cossens and Gin 1994; Mansfeld 1992; Roehl and Fesenmaier 1992; Um and Crompton 1990). The role of safety concerns, a parallel concept, has received even less research attention (Demos 1992; Goodrich 1991; Pinhey and Iverson 1994). Studies have related tourists' risk-taking tendencies to personality traits (Plog 1974) and have asserted that risk perceptions are situation specific (Roehl and Fesenmaier 1992). Roehl and Fesenmaier (1992) suggested decision makers pay more attention to some risk dimensions than others. In other words, one potential tourist

may focus on physical risks (i.e,, being a victim of crime) while another focuses on financial risks (i.e., not getting value for money spent) for the same destination. Financial, psychological, satisfaction, and time risks were found to be most frequently associated with pleasure travel (Roehl and Fesenmaier 1992), and time, budget, and physical distance were identified as important travel constraints used to evaluate destinations (Cook and McCleary 1983).

The inherently logical connection between past travel experience and future travel behavior has not been studied widely, but past travel experience has been found to influence future behavioral intentions (Goodrich 1978; Mazursky 1989; Perdue 1985). Mazursky (1989) stated that future travel is influenced not only by the extent but also the nature of past travel experience and even suggested that personal experience may exert more influence on travel decisions than information acquired from external sources. Therefore, it can be inferred that personal experience with travel in general or a destination in particular can affect risk or safety perceptions (by confirming or eliminating them), which in turn can influence the likelihood of future travel to, and the desire to avoid, that destination.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION OF STUDY

The view that image is "a critical factor in the destination choice process" (Mayo 1973, pp. 211-18) is widely supported (Calantone et al. 1989; Crompton 1979; Dann 1996; Gartner 1989, 1993; Gartner and Hunt 1987; Goodrich 1978; Hunt 1975; Pearce 1982; Reilly 1990). Because perceptions of risk and safety can influence destination image and choice, their relevance to behavioral intentions also needs to be recognized, Risks that potential travelers associate with specific destinations may help form lasting images. Theoretical sup-port for this concept stems from Anderson's (1981, 1982) information integration theory (IIT) and Rogers's (1975, 1983) protection motivation theory (PM'T).

ITT (Anderson 1981, 1982) proposes that individuals form psychophysical and value judgments according to complex decision-making steps (i.e., need awareness, information search, choice). Psychophysical judgments are subjective perceptions of physical reality (i.e., image of a particular tourist destination), whereas value judgments refer to the way individuals rank destinations according to their attributes (i.e., attractiveness, safety, risk) to form an overall image. Impressions, evaluations, and judgments already formed of destinations under consideration (possibly after personal experience with those destinations) may change if (1) additional destinations are added to the evaluation (i.e., an attractive vacation destination previously not considered is recommended by a friend), (2) new information with the potential of changing the consideration set is learned (i.e., recent crime wave at/near the destination under consideration), or (3) travelers' perceptions of a region/destination change as a result of new information, prior to final choice (i.e., media coverage of terrorist activity/natural disaster).

PMT (Rogers 1975, 1983) focuses on three cognitive processes individuals experience in a risky decision process (i,e., appraising threat intensity, considering probability of occurrence, believing in efficacy of coping response). According to this theory, the likelihood of engaging in protective behavior, such as risk avoidance, is positively related to the degree that available information suggests (1) the magnitude of danger is relatively high (i.e., increase in airplane accidents, crime or terrorist activity targeting citizens of potential traveler's nationality), (2) the probability of occurrence is great (i,e., recent occurrences involving travel regions/ destinations under consideration), (3) effective actions to control consequences exist (i.e., selecting safe regions and destinations, taking extra precautions while traveling to risky destinations, canceling travel plans altogether), and (4) the decision maker is capable of controlling consequences (i.e., available discretionary time and money to permit travel to safer destinations, freedom from obligations to allow cancellation of travel plans, accessibility of information to help avoid risks).

Together, IIT and PMT imply that future travel behavior may be influenced by images of safety and risk that individuals have of regions or may have developed from past travel experience. Future travel behavior can thus serve as risk avoidance (or "protection motivation").

STUDY PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this study was to examine influences of past international travel experience, types of risk associated with international travel, and overall degree of safety felt during international travel on individuals' likelihood of travel to various geographic regions on their next international vacation trip or avoidance of those regions due to perceived risk, The following research hypotheses were developed:

Hypothesis 1: The likelihood of future travel to or avoidance of various geographic regions on one's next international vacation trip is directly related to past travel to those regions.

Hypothesis 2: The likelihood of future travel to or avoidance of various geographic regions on one's next international vacation trip is directly related to types of risks associated with international travel to those destinations.

Hypothesis 3: The likelihood of future travel to or avoidance of various geographic regions on one's next international vacation trip is directly related to the over-all degree of safety one feels during international vacation travel.

METHOD

A self-administered questionnaire was developed. Questions focused on respondents' risk perceptions, range of past travel experience, future international vacation travel plans, feelings of safety during international travel, traveler personality type (using Plog's [1974] psychocentric/allocentric scale), and demographic profiles.

Dependent Variables

In two multiple-item questions, respondents were asked to indicate (1) the likelihood of travel to 10 regions (Africa, Asia, Australia/New Zealand, Caribbean islands, Central America, Europe, Hawaiian islands, Middle East, North America, outside of the United States, and South America) on their next international vacation trip and (2) the regions they will avoid traveling to. North America as a whole was included because regions were studied rather than specific destination countries; however, it is likely that Canada and Mexico have different perceived risk factors that may have influenced responses. In addition, although the Hawaiian Islands are a part of the United States, they were included as a region.

Independent Variables

The extent and range of international travel experience were determined by a multiple-item question. Once past experience was established with screening questions ("Do you travel internationally for business/vacations?" "When did you last travel internationally?"), the extent of experience was measured by asking about the number of international trips in the past 5 years and over one's lifetime. Respondents were asked how many total trips they had made to the same 10 regions. For the analysis, answers were collapsed to dichotomous variables representing past visitation versus no visitation to each region. To measure perceptions of risk, the survey instrument presented respondents with 10 types of risk and asked the extent to which they associated each type of risk with international travel using a 6-point Likert-type scale *(none to very high)* (Table 1). Seven of these risks (equipment/functional, financial, physical, psychological, satisfaction, social, time) have been previously used in lei-sure and tourism research (Cheron and Ritchie 1982; Roehl and Fesenmaier 1992) and consumer behavior studies (Schiffman and Kanuk 1991). Three other risks (health, terrorism, political instability) were added for this study. To assess feelings of safety during travel, nine international tourism situations were presented, and respondents were asked to indicate their feelings for each situation on a 5-point Likert-type scale *(very safe to very unsafe)* (Table 1). This scale is somewhat similar to Pinhey and Iverson's (1994) 7-item scale used to measure travelers' perceptions of safety in various tourism and recreation situations (i.e,, sightseeing, water sports).

TABLE 1

TYPES OF RISK ASSOCIATED WITH INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL AND FEELINGS OF SAFETY DURING INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

Risk Factors	Safety Factors
Equipment/functional risk: possibility of mechanical, equipment, organizational problems occurring during travel or at destination (transportation, accommodations, attractions).	Checking in/out or transferring at airports
Financial risk: possibility that travel experience will not provide value for money spent.	During air travel
Health risk: possibility of becoming sick while traveling or at the destination.	During cruise travel
Physical risk: possibility of physical danger or injury detrimental to health (accidents).	Staying at hotels/motels in foreign countries
Political instability risk: possibility of becoming involved in the political turmoil of the country being visited.	Sightseeing in foreign countries
Psychological risk: possibility that travel experience will not reflect the individual's personality or self-image (disappointment with travel experience).	At tourist attractions in foreign countries
Satisfaction risk: possibility that travel experience will not provide personal satisfaction/self-actualization (dissatisfaction with travel experience).	Visiting entertainment establishments in foreign countries
Social risk: possibility that travel choice/experience will affect others' opinion of individual (disapproval of vacation choices or activities by friends/family/associates).	Visiting large cities in foreign countries
Terrorism risk: possibility of being involved in a terrorist act.	Visiting rural areas in foreign countries
Time risk: possibility that travel experience will take too much time or will waste time.	

A mail survey was conducted in the spring of 1994 using a modified Dillman (1978) approach. A random probability sample of 1,100 U.S. residents (proportionately drawn from all 50 states, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands) was purchased from a mail list broker (Dunhill International List). The study's international travel focus required a sample with interests parallel to the topic. The list included individuals who expressed interest in international travel (i.e., those who inquired about travel information, respondents to travel surveys). From these names, a systematic random sampling was conducted, and questionnaires were sent to 500 individuals who had traveled internationally in the past or had expressed an interest in doing so. A total of 240 usable surveys was returned, representing a 48% response rate. We acknowledge a weakness of the study in that the sample size is small and skewed toward individuals interested in international travel; however, the study was exploratory in nature.

To address the question of possible nonresponse bias, a systematic random sample of nonrespondents *(N* = 30) was selected and interviewed by telephone. Results of the telephone survey revealed that nonrespondents had less international travel experience than those who responded to the mail survey *(t*= 3.45;p= .001). In addition, the personality type of the majority of nonrespondents was psychocentric/stabilizer *(t* = 4.97; p = .000) compared with mostly midcentric respondents. Significant differences were found in the extent of information search between the two groups (t = 4.90; p = .000). Nonrespondents reported less information search than respondents and were less concerned with safety than their counterparts (t = 2.27; p = .024). Compared with respondents, nonrespondents were more likely to be females (x2 = 6.89; *df = 1; p* = .009) with lower levels of education (x2 = 19.18; *df*= 5;p= .002). A series of cross tabulations was con-ducted to test Hypothesis 1. All other hypothesized relation-ships were tested using logistic regression.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Hypothesis 1

Results of the cross tabulations revealed significant differences between individuals who had past travel experience with various geographic regions and those who did not in terms of their likelihood for travel to those regions on their next international trip (Table 2). Regions most likely to be visited in the future overall included Europe (53% planning to visit), North America (48%), and the Caribbean (44%). Conversely, the regions most likely to be avoided in the future were the Middle East (617o) and Africa (56%). Past experience visiting a region both increases the intention to travel there again and decreases the intention to avoid areas, particularly risky areas. For example, the 53% who planned to visit Europe included 65% who had been there before versus

only 18% who had never visited Europe. Likewise, Caribbean-bound travelers included 56% who were planning return visits versus 11% who had never visited, and North American vacations were planned by 55% who had visited before versus 17% who had never visited. With respect to avoiding regions, previous visitation tended to reduce the proportions of respondents who stated they would avoid various regions. Most notably, 38% of previous visitors to Africa stated they would avoid visiting again versus 61% who had never visited. Likewise, 40% of those who had been to the Middle East said they would avoid traveling there again versus 71% of those who had not visited the Middle East before.

TABLE 2

PLANS FOR FUTURE TRAVEL TO VARIOUS REGIONS OF THE WORLD BY PAST TRAVEL EXPERIENCE (IN PERCENTAGES)

	Plan to Avoid Region in Future			Plan to Travel to Region in Future		
	Visited Region Before			Visited Region Before		
Region	Overall	Yes	No	Overall	Yes	No
Africa	56	38	61	2	*ns*	*ns*
Asia	18	6	26	6	13	2
Australia / New Zealand	3	*ns*	*ns*	10	21	8
Caribbean	5	2	13	44	56	11
Central America	26	11	33	8	15	5
Europe	4	1	15	53	65	18
Hawaii	< 1	*ns*	*ns*	8	15	3
Middle East	61	40	71	6	13	3
North America	3	*ns*	*ns*	48	55	17
South America	28	15	34	5	*ns*	*ns*

Note: *ns* = not significant.

To test the relationships between planned travel behavior and the two sets of predictor variables included in Hypotheses 2 and 3 (types of risk and perceptions of safety while traveling internationally), the odds of respondents reporting that they plan to visit (or will avoid visiting) each of 10 regions were examined. Planning to visit and planning to avoid visiting were analyzed separately for each region in relation to the risk perception and safety perception variables.

The odds of visiting or avoiding each region were calculated for the two sets of independent variables. However, certain regions were omitted from this analysis because of the highly skewed results to the future travel questions. For example, very few respondents indicated their intent to visit Africa (2%), Asia (6%), Australia / New Zealand (10%), Central America (8%), Hawaii (8%), the Middle East (6%), or South America (5%), Hence, logistic regression models were tested only for planned travel to the Caribbean, Europe, and North America—the only regions receiving relatively large proportions of yes responses (44%, 53%, and 48%, respectively). Similarly, very few respondents reported that they would avoid Australia / New Zealand (3%), the Caribbean (5%), Europe (4%), Hawaii (< 1%), and North America (3%). Thus, logistic regression analysis on planning-to-avoid regions was conducted for the regions of Africa (56% plan to avoid), Asia (18%), Central America (26%), the Middle East (61%), and South America (28%).

Hypothesis 2

Of the three analyses examining the relationship of 10 risk types to plans to visit a region, only plans to visit Europe produced a significant model (Table 3); the models for the Caribbean and North America were not significant, and the other regions were not tested due to their skewed response distributions. Social risk, or the risk of friends or relatives disapproving of one's travel choice, was the only significant predictor of the intent to travel to Europe. Those feeling a higher degree of social risk were less likely to report their intention to visit Europe.

TABLE 3

LOGISTIC REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF PERCEPTIONS OF 10 RISK TYPES AND PLANS TO TRAVEL TO VARIOUS REGIONS

	Europe	
Types of Risk	Wald[a]	Exp (*B*)[b]
Equipment	.75	.85
Financial	.15	.94
Health	2.11	1.30
Physical	.06	.94
Political instability	.00	.99
Psychological	1.00	.81
Satisfaction	.25	1.10
Social	7.57***	.63
Terrorism	.25	.92
Time	1.66	.79
Chi-square		31.4**
Percentage correctly classified		67

a. The Wald statistic is the square of the ratio of the regression coefficient to its standard error; it provides a test of the statistical significance of each variable in the model.
b. The Exp (*B*) represents the odds of visiting or planning to avoid a given region. If Exp (*B*) for an independent variable is greater than 1 (e.g., 1.5), when the independent variable increases by one unit, the chance of the person reporting the intention to visit or avoid the region increases by a factor of 1.5. Conversely, if Exp (*B*) is less than 1, a unit increase in the independent variable decreases the odds of the event occurring.
$^{**}p < .01$. $^{***}p < .001$.

Perceived risks were generally stronger predictors of avoiding regions than of planning to visit them. Significant models were found for all five regions examined relative to planning to avoid traveling to each region (Table 4), The weakest model was for avoiding Central America, which showed no significant predictors, even though the overall regression model was significant. Half of the types of risk (financial, physical, psychological, social, and time) were never significant for any of the regions. The remaining risk types, in various combinations, were related to the intent to avoid the five regions examined, Logistic regression models for the various regions contained from one to three risk types as significant predictors of avoiding certain regions. Generally, the two risk types focused on in this study—terrorism and political instability risk—were among the strongest predictors and showed results that were not surprising. Those perceiving a higher degree of risk in international travel due to political instability were significantly more likely to say they would avoid traveling to Asia and South America (equipment risk was the only other type of risk contributing significantly to the models for these two regions). Those who perceived more risk due to terrorism were more likely to say they would avoid the Middle East and Africa. For the Middle East, terrorism risk was the only significant predictor of intention to avoid the region, while for Africa, satisfaction and health risk also contributed to the model.

TABLE 4

LOGISTIC REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF PERCEPTIONS OF 10 RISK TYPES AND PLANS TO AVOID TRAVEL TO VARIOUS REGIONS

	Africa		Asia		Central America		Middle East		South America	
Types of Risk	Wald	Exp (*B*)	Wald	Exp (*B*)	Wald	Exp (*B*)	Wald	Exp (*B*)	Wald	Exp (*B*)
Equipment	.15	.93	7.21**	2.02	.15	.93	.00	1.01	7.65**	1.77
Financial	1.31	1.21	.51	1.16	.00	1.01	.24	1.09	.39	1.11
Health	4.30*	.67	3.36	.63	.03	.97	2.84	.71	3.29	.68
Physical	.02	.96	.29	1.17	.26	1.13	.08	.93	.12	.91
Political instability	1.34	1.24	3.93*	1.67	1.99	1.32	.82	1.18	3.78*	1.52
Psychological	2.01	.73	.01	1.02	2.32	1.40	.53	1.18	.83	1.24
Satisfaction	12.18**	2.27	1.98	1.41	.75	1.20	.70	1.19	1.04	1.25
Social	.48	.89	.71	1.19	.75	1.16	.11	.94	.04	1.04
Terrorism	5.29*	1.51	.76	1.23	.02	.97	10.6**	1.80	1.31	1.26
Time	.62	.86	.45	.84	.50	.86	2.20	.75	2.72	.71
Chi-square		34.9**		39.8**		19.5**		30.2**		34.6**
Percentage correctly classified		64		83		77		64		74

$^{*}p < .05$. $^{**}p < .01$.

Hypothesis 3

Results for the analysis of planned travel behavior in relation to perceptions of safety in various tourist situations showed a similar pattern (Tables 5 and 6). Like the risk perceptions, safety factors were generally more strongly related to avoiding regions than planning to visit them. Planning to visit Europe was associated with feeling more unsafe during cruise travel and more safe during air travel and while visiting large cities and rural areas (Table 5). The only significant predictor of planning a visit to North American destinations was feeling more safe visiting rural areas, and this model was considerably weaker than the model for Europe. Those who felt more unsafe visiting large cities during international travel were more likely to report that they would avoid visiting Asia and South America (Table 6). Those who felt more unsafe at tourist attractions were less likely to avoid Africa, while those who felt more unsafe visiting entertainment spots in foreign countries were most likely to avoid Asia. In general, however, most of the perceptions of safety in various traveling situations were not significantly related to the intention to avoid traveling to any particular region.

TABLE 5

LOGISTIC REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF PERCEPTIONS OF SAFETY WHILE TRAVELING TO AND PLANNING TO TRAVEL TO VARIOUS REGIONS

	Europe		North America	
Safety Factor	Wald	Exp (*B*)	Wald	Exp (*B*)
At airports	2.13	1.40	.45	1.14
During air travel	3.73*	.61	1.56	1.32
During cruise travel	3.68*	1.56	3.38	.68
At hotels/motels	1.12	.67	.20	.86
During sightseeing	1.15	1.63	1.85	1.77
At entertainment spots	1.78	.61	2.49	1.74
At tourist attractions	.97	1.50	2.74	.52
Visiting large cities	3.85*	.53	.81	1.30
Visiting rural areas	5.58*	.45	6.18*	.47
Chi-square		44.3**		17.0*
Percentage correctly classified		67		59

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

TABLE 6

LOGISTIC REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF PERCEPTIONS OF SAFETY WHILE TRAVELING TO AND PLANNING TO AVOID TRAVEL TO VARIOUS REGIONS

	Africa		Asia		Central America		South America	
Safety Factors	Wald	Exp (*B*)	Wald	Exp (*B*)	Wald	Exp (*B*)	Wald	Exp (*B*)
At airports	.37	1.14	2.54	1.50	1.24	.75	3.48	1.49
During air travel	3.31	1.60	.66	.78	.02	1.03	4.48*	.56
During cruise travel	.31	1.13	3.33	1.78	.02	1.04	.41	1.18
At hotels/motels	2.95	1.91	.16	.85	.59	1.32	.75	.72
During sightseeing	3.43	.41	1.95	.50	.31	1.38	1.62	1.76
At entertainment spots	1.88	1.67	11.21**	4.75	.11	.88	1.00	1.47
At tourist attractions	3.82*	.43	.31	.77	.09	1.13	.48	1.34
Visiting large cities	1.79	1.55	6.34**	2.61	3.28	1.80	3.83*	1.90
Visiting rural areas	3.67	1.90	.09	1.12	.56	1.28	.01	1.04
Chi-square		33.3**		46.9**		25.3**		41.6**
Percentage correctly classified		65		83		74		78

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

CONCLUSION

The results of the study (while generalizable only to individuals similar to the study sample) support earlier findings that previous travel experience and risk perceptions influence future travel behavior. In addition, the degree of safety individuals feel during different international travel situations helps to determine their interest in future international travel. While perceptions of risk and feelings of safety during travel appear to have a stronger influence on the avoidance of regions rather than likelihood of travel to them, past travel experience appears to be a powerful influence on behavioral intentions. Individuals with past travel experience to various geographic regions may become more confident as a result of their experience and thus be more likely to travel

back to those regions. This finding supports Pinhey and Iverson's (1994) earlier finding that tourists with better communication skills who are well informed about the local culture feel safer. Pinhey and Iverson hypothesized that previous travel experience might increase feelings of safety. In this study, for example, those who traveled to areas such as the Middle East, Africa, Central and South America, and Asia were less likely to avoid those regions. This particular finding implies that personal experience with a destination may actually alter risk perceptions during international vacation travel decisions.

Study findings can be interpreted within the framework of both IIT (Anderson 1981, 1982) and PMT (Rogers 1975, 1983). In terms of attitudinal responses, the affective and cognitive dimensions are aptly described by IIT. Respondents demonstrated IIT's risky decision stages involving the formation of psychophysical and value judgments and the integration of various types of information into travel decisions. Apparently, respondents not only felt varying degrees of safety during different travel activities and experiences, but they also associated geographic regions with certain types of risk (i.e., the Middle East and terrorism risk), which led them to express subjective perceptions of those regions. The study found judgment and evaluation of destination alternatives to be influenced by past travel experience. More specifically, past experience with certain regions increased the likelihood of travel to and decreased the intention to avoid those regions among study participants. It is also quite possible that evaluation and judgment of regions could change (positively or negatively) as a result of input during social interaction or simply the evening news.

Even though PMT is considered to explain a cognitive process, it is very useful in illustrating the behavioral dimension of travel attitudes (or the outcome of risky decisions). Generally, respondents' intention to avoid a particular geographic region represents protective behavior or risk avoidance. Deciding to avoid regions perceived as risky is simply an exercise of the freedom of choice enjoyed by vacation travelers (unlike business or obligation travelers who do not enjoy so much freedom) or the demonstration of the last two stages of engaging in protective behavior: (1) having effective actions to control consequences (i.e., being aware of destination alternatives that are perceived to be safe) and (2) being capable of controlling consequences (i.e., the freedom to choose to avoid a region perceived as risky).

In conclusion, leisure travelers are in a strong position to practice protective behavior when they associate risk with international travel. To guide their travel decisions, travelers use their past travel experiences and their subjective perceptions. Actual travel experience with a destination affords individuals an opportunity to compare their perceptions with reality. In the absence of personal experience, individuals can easily avoid destinations they perceive as risky by choosing others they consider safe. Whether a destination or region is really safe or risky does not seem to be as relevant to travel decisions as potential travelers' own perceptions, Additional research is needed to further the results of this study, Several areas need investigating, including how negative traveler perceptions develop, how travelers' risk perceptions can be altered, and how destinations that are stigmatized as risky can use the findings to improve their image and marketing strategies.

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